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SUBJECT: EAPC SECURITY FORUM TRIES TO MUSTER SUPPORT FOR  
AFGHANISTAN, ENERGY SOLUTIONS

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¶1. (U) SUMMARY: On June 24 and 25 the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) Security Forum met in Astana, Kazakhstan, to discuss Afghanistan and other regional issues and energy security. This was the first-ever EAPC event in a former Soviet state. Allied nations called on Partners to take greater ownership of the EAPC, contribute to the international community's efforts in Afghanistan, and help build capabilities in the region. On energy security, EAPC member countries called for diversification of energy sources and supplies, as well as the need to invest in modernization of pipelines. The seminar was an opportunity for the U.S. and its NATO allies to underscore their interest in expanding engagement with Central Asian partners, while stressing to the Russians that this is not a zero-sum game. END SUMMARY.

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Heads of Delegation Working Dinner  
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¶2. (U) At the June 24 Working Dinner, Allies stressed that the 22 EAPC Partner nations should be more proactive within the partnership framework. Allies advocated for a greater use of informal discussions, for Partners to be more forthcoming with their opinions, and for them to provide input to the formulation of NATO's new Strategic Concept. Belarus Ambassador Gapeev stated that every country should give input to the EAPC, but also advocated that the same rules should be observed by all member countries. Azerbaijan Ambassador Khasiyev called on members to evaluate the conceptual direction of the EAPC, which he said might require updating the forum's founding documents. Swiss Ambassador de Dardel warned against the artificial separation of Partner countries into different camps.

¶3. (U) Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Alexander Vershbow, the U.S. delegation head, acknowledged the efforts of EAPC member countries to stabilize Afghanistan, noting that many had also contributed to Balkans stabilization efforts in the 1990s. He stated

that Afghanistan will require a broad international effort, combining military power with a robust civilian strategy. Dr. Davood Moradian, Senior Advisor to Afghanistan's Foreign Minister, argued that there were two Afghanistans -- the one portrayed in the media as facing significant challenges and the one that was emerging as a functioning state. Allies called on Central Asian Partners to assist Afghanistan's regional integration.

¶4. (U) Ambassador Vershbow said that the August 2008 conflict in Georgia showed that the work NATO began in the 1990s to create an integrated European security system was still unfinished. Acknowledging that there was room for many regional and subregional organizations, he said that nations needed to evaluate how to make the European security architecture more effective -- a discussion that would be launched at the OSCE Ministerial in Corfu. Russian Deputy Minister Denisov reflected that the "sad events" of August 2008 led to a loss of confidence in the Euro-Atlantic region and called for confidence to be restored. German PermRep Brandenburg called on member countries to create synergy between the EAPC and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Kazakhstan Foreign Minister Tazhin also cited the relevance of other bodies such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), while stressing Kazakhstan's commitment to EAPC and PFP.

¶5. (U) Armenian Minister of Defense Ohanyan stated that his country was committed to peaceful resolution of all disputes with Azerbaijan. Turkish Deputy Undersecretary for Political Affairs Cevikoz, alluding to his country's rapprochement with Armenia, intervened that his country encourages resolution of

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Nagorno-Karabakh. Serbian Assistant Minister for NATO and Defense Affairs Vujic said that Serbia would do everything within its power to safeguard its territorial integrity and characterized Kosovo's independence as a factor for instability in the region. In response to Serbia, Albanian PermRep Kuko said that "the train has left the station," adding that recognizing Kosovo's independence was the right decision.

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Afghanistan, Regional Issues and Energy Security  
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¶6. (U) During the panel discussions on June 25, EAPC member countries agreed on the importance of a positive outcome on Afghanistan for the region as a whole and expressed concerns about the drug trade in Central Asia. Dr. Moradian identified Pakistan as the main hurdle to achieving peace in Afghanistan. Ambassador Vershbow called on EAPC Partners to contribute to NATO Trust Funds developed for Afghanistan and to look for areas where they could assist economic and capacity building efforts. UK PermRep Eldon argued that efforts in Afghanistan should be enhanced by partnership, not undermined by competition.

¶7. (U) Member countries agreed that trafficking in arms and persons contributes to instability in Central Asia, called for greater cooperation on water issues, and acknowledged the need to help build capabilities in the region. They also agreed that in the Caucasus it was critical to use regional fora such as the OSCE's Minsk Group and the Geneva Process to solve disputes, while at the same time also concluding that countries were responsible for the maintenance of order within their borders.

¶8. (U) On energy security, member countries roundly called for diversification of energy sources and supplies, with some calling special attention to the need to promote energy savings. Czech Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Pojar drew attention to the need to invest in modernization of pipelines. Some countries argued that forming public-private

partnerships is less important than forging strategic alliances. Led by Allies from Europe's east, a number of participants stressed the importance of diversifying away from purely Russian sources. They also argued that the increasing role of China in energy markets needed to be considered.

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Comment  
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¶9. (U) In choosing to hold the EAPC Security Forum for the first time outside of Europe, NATO attempted to send a message of support to its Central Asia and Caucasus Partner countries. What remains to be seen is if those Partner countries seize the initiative and move their relationships with NATO forward in an active way, with concrete results. A bad sign was the absence of representatives from Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. Whatever the outcome of this particular event, however, NATO must continue to find ways to reach out to the countries on its periphery.

¶10. (U) This message was cleared by Assistant Secretary of Defense Vershbow.  
DAALDER